

11 June 1945

Miami, Florida

Dear Miss McGlynn,

Thank you loads for your consideration in sending the newsletter from home. It's a fine morale lifter, and helps us think of former happier times. I've been slow in answering as I've expected a change in address, but doubt it now. The reports that are contained in the newsletter are certainly interesting - especially since they are written by former students who are eyewitnesses to such history making events. I'm afraid that anything I might write about experiences here in Puerto Rico would be very dull in comparison to incidents that are taking place in action theaters. I've been in Puerto Rico about one year. The one certain conclusion that I have reached during that time is that the people home know very little about this island, its people, its customs. Having been here a year does not entitle me to make any statements or give any opinions on the problems and solutions. I know very, very little about Insular affairs. I honestly believe that considerable time on the part of experts must be devoted to render any satisfactory solutions. The main problem is an economic one as we all know. In comparing the standards of living here and in the U.S., the island's is indeed low, however, in comparison to the other Antilles islands, including Cuba, Puerto Rico ranks first. It has more telephones, more automobiles, more hospitals, more schools, more money allocated to public education, more roads, and more consumers goods for purchase than any other of the Caribbean islands. All this I believe, is a direct reflection on the part our government has played in the 47 years P. R. has been under our flag. There's

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a great deal of the old Spanish culture alive here, 400 years is a long time, and intermingling with our American makes an unusual spectacle. There has been some pressure recently on the part of the leading political figures on the island to get Congress to grant permission for a plebiscite on future statues. Some want outright independence, some statehood, others eventual independence with economic aid. My own observations make me think that the island need to assistance of our country economically and if granted a little more political control than at present, everyone would be satisfied. The Insular Gov't gets most of its income as a result of being allowed to sell to our country without paying taxes on the products. The revenue taxes paid by our citizens on P.R. products (such as rum) is remitted to the Insular Gov't. If the island should

lose this favored policy, it would be in a fix. There are over 2 million people here spread over an area 100 miles by 36 miles - over 500 people per square mile. Transportation is surprisingly good. Seems to be thousands of buses. The people are far from starving. There is ample food. Rice and beans is the popular dish, mostly because the people are used to it. And prefer it to other food. Latin music is most popular, with our continental style running a poor second. Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby hold very little charm for the señoritas. Fox trot and waltz are strange dances - it's always a bolero or rhumba.

About my work here - I'm an instructor. Have been training Puerto Rican troops. Their training is divided into two phases - one, English, the other, military. Our job

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is to turn out troops who are proficient enough to pass an examination in English up to fourth grade level. Many of these soldiers know only a negligible amount of English, when they arrive at camp, but usually meet the army requirements after their training is over. In the military, the men are enthusiastic and develop into good material. In my off duty time I have completed a course in Spanish. Also active in athletics - coached the camp basketball team and now playing baseball. The initials of our outfit are STC (Special Training Center) Everytime I see those letters, I recall the days back at school.

I guess that's about all. Please keep those newsletters coming. I look forward to them, and any news about my classmates. Extend my best regards to Mr. Sullivan, Miss Edwards, Miss Burnham, Mr. Lowrey, and the others. Perhaps before long we shall get together in a reunion that will top all other reunions. Thanks again, Miss McGlynn-

Sincerely,
Herb